

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 3662 for the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE)
From: Craig P. Orgeron, Ph.D.
Date: August 15, 2011
Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications
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The State believes there may be some confusion regarding the scope of RFP No. 3662 and is providing the following information to assist Vendors in understanding the goals of the MDE Data Warehouse (DW)/Business Intelligence (BI) Project. MDE desires a COTS solution but realizes that customization will be required to meet the specific needs of MDE. Listed below is a summary of the main goals for the DW/BI Project.

- 1) Selection of elements and creation of processes to stage key data elements from MSIS and other subsidiary systems into the created data warehouse (see Section VII, Item 8.11 for a list of systems). This will be a DBA driven process and should result in the creation of a data dictionary for the Data Warehouse. Use of the BI toolset should not be required to build elements in the warehouse.
- 2) EDFACTS/EDEN Federal reporting file generation. These are a collection of defined files that are uploaded on a variable and scheduled basis to The Education Data Exchange Network (EDEN). EDEN is a centralized portal through which Mississippi and other states submit their educational data to the U.S. Department of Education. Some of MDE's data may come into the warehouse in the form of spreadsheets or comma delimited files.
- 3) Conversion of existing MDE ad-hoc reports. These reports are mostly created by MDE's MIS Department, but also include other selected reports from MSIS. MDE also expects a BI toolset that would allow power-users to create reports off the data warehouse. Access to data and the system will be controlled by role based security. The BI system should have appropriate, easy to use data modeling and projection abilities.

Vendors should also understand the majority of the information being requested for Phase I of the DW/BI project currently resides in the MSIS database and most of the remaining data elements are available through file extracts from external systems.

RFP Number 3662 is hereby amended as follows:

1. Section VII, Item 4, Procurement Project Schedule is modified as follows:

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date for RFP	06/07/2011
Second Advertisement Date for RFP	06/14/2011
Vendor Conference	10:00 a.m. Central Time on 06/20/2011
Deadline for Vendor's Part I Written Questions	3:00 p.m. Central Time on 06/28/2011
Deadline for Part I Questions Answered and Posted to ITS Web Site	08/15/2011
Deadline for Vendor's Part II Written Questions	3:00 p.m. Central Time on 08/19/2011
Deadline for Part II Questions Answered and Posted to ITS Web Site	08/25/2011
Open Proposals	09/30/2011
Evaluation of Proposals	10/03/2011 – 11/03/2011
ITS Board Presentation	12/15/2011
Contract Negotiation	11/03/2011 - 11/25/2011
MDE Board Presentation	12/16/2011
Proposed Project Start-up	01/09/2012
Project Go-Live Deadline	06/01/2013

2. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 8.15.4.3 is hereby deleted.

3. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 8.16 is hereby modified to add 8.16.1.3.

8.16.1.3 Implementation of public access with view, filter, and sort capabilities.

4. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 8.18.2.1 is hereby modified, as follows.

If proposed solution utilizes Java, then Java must be Version 6, Update 24 or higher.

5. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 8.20.13.2 is hereby modified to delete the original 8.20.13.2.1, as follows:

8.20.13.2 District power user – approximately 200

8.20.13.2.1 Can view student level data for their district ONLY;

8.20.13.2.2 Has access to all data for their district ONLY; and

8.20.13.2.3 Can create and publish reports, queries, etc.

6. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 8.22.7.1 is hereby deleted.

7. Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 8.23 is hereby deleted.

8. As discussed in the Mandatory Vendor's Conference, the State is including a spreadsheet in Exhibit F, *Requirements Matrix*. Vendors must respond to requirements using the attached spreadsheet.

Vendor must include in their proposal a response to each amended requirement as listed above. Vendor must respond using the same terminology as provided in the original requirements.

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as they were submitted, except to remove any reference to a specific vendor. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: Section VII, Technical Requirements, Item 8.1 - Would you view an established SLDS framework, with pre-built models as a COTS?

Response: Yes.

Question 2: Section VII, Technical Requirements, Item 8.20.13.2.2 - Our team needs clarification on what is meant by: "define, create and load data from their district area." Our assumption is that you are referring to building a report and that all data loading other than the ETL data warehouse load refers to loading your report page?

Response: Vendor's reference should have been Item 8.20.13.2.1. This item is being removed from RFP No. 3662; please see Item 5 of this clarification.

Question 3: Pages 23 and 24 -With respect to the Performance Bond requirement located on pages 23 and 24 and Article 46 of the Standard Contract, it may not be possible for all Vendors to secure a performance bond for the entire contract. Would the State accept an annually renewable performance bond based upon the annual price of the contract?

Response: MDE would have to make a business decision during contract negotiations with the awarded Vendor. MDE would evaluate all factors including the financial strength of the Vendor in making its decision. Vendors might also

consider an irrevocable bank letter of credit as another means of meeting this requirement.

Question 4: Page 24 - With respect to the Performance Bond requirements on page 24 and Article 45 “Liquidated Damages” requirement of the Standard Contract, does the State agree that the vendor would not be responsible for delays caused by a force majeure event (i.e. events beyond the contractor’s reasonable control including without limitation, acts of God; acts or omissions of governmental authorities or the other party or any third party; strikes, lockouts or other industrial disturbances; acts of public enemies; wars; blockades; riots; civil disturbances; epidemics; floods; hurricanes; tornadoes; and any other similar acts, events, or omissions)?

Response: **The State agrees that liquidated damages would not apply in the event the delays are caused by a force majeure event.**

Question 5: Page 24 - Also with respect to Performance Bond requirements on page 24 and Article 45 “Liquidated Damages” requirement of the Standard Contract, we presume that the Vendor will not be held responsible for delay or default to the extent caused by the State or third parties contracted by the State. Is this correct?

Response: **The State agrees that the Vendor will not be responsible for delays caused by the State or third parties.**

Question 6: Page 12 - With respect to Article 44 “Personnel Assignment Guarantee” of the Standard Contract and the Vendor Personnel provision of page 12, does the State understand and agree that the awarded vendor will manage staffing decisions and must have the ability to remove or reassign staff members in support of personal career development?

Response: **No. The Vendor must obtain written approval from the State in order to substitute personnel assigned to the project and must do so according to the conditions set forth in Article 44 of the Standard Turnkey Agreement attached in Exhibit A.**

Question 7: Exhibit B - Is the Special Education data, listed as a Module 1 deliverable, included within MSIS as indicated in Exhibit B or is the Special Education data contained in a separate database?

Response: **Special Education data is contained inside the MSIS database.**

Question 8: Exhibit B - The Student Assessment data, listed as a Module 1 deliverable, is not listed in Exhibit B. Mississippi Alternate Assessment of Extended Curriculum Framework (MAAECF) however is referenced on page 112. Is this the Student Assessment data source? Is there any additional information available for the Student Assessment data source?

Response: No. The Special Education (SPED) data referenced in Exhibit B is not the data source for the Mississippi Alternate Assessment of Extended Curriculum Framework (MAAECF). The MAAECF data is contained and managed as an external data source collected by Mississippi State University and will be fed to the DW/BI via an external file. The SPED data referenced in Exhibit B is found in MSIS.

Question 9: Page 1 - Given that school is out and summer vacations for many employees take place around the July 4th holiday, is it possible to obtain a 30-day delay in the response, i.e., until August 25th?

Response: Please see the revised Procurement Project Schedule in Item 1 above.

Question 10: Section VII, 5.11 - This Section states, "All findings, designs, documentation, and other deliverables produced under this contract become the exclusive property of the State for use without restriction."

We believe the intent of this requirement is to grant the State the rights of ownership of any IP developed under this contract. If the wording can be changed to permit joint ownership, lessons learned from this engagement can be used elsewhere by the vendor. This still permits the State to have license rights for any work performed.

Is joint ownership of intellectual property (IP) permitted under this contract?

Response: Since this project is being funded by USDOE, the State cannot claim joint ownership. Vendors should refer to Section VII, Item 16.1 for a discussion of the rights for any custom built software.

Question 11: Section VII, 5.13 - The RFP notes should any component(s) necessary for the successful operation of the requested system be omitted from Vendor's proposal, then the Vendor must be willing to provide the component(s) at no additional cost.

In Section 5.12, the State clearly identifies that the RFP does not provide sufficient detail for estimation and potential component requirements. Yet Section 5.13 makes the vendor responsible for those omissions. This potentially places an unreasonable financial responsibility on the vendor for State's requirement omissions.

Can we include certain assumptions around the capabilities that exist within the State, e.g., expect the State to respond during the RFP Orals process to clarify those capabilities, and then permit the vendor to alter their response to reflect those changes?

Response: The State has tried to incorporate the known requirements; however, if the State has missed critical components necessary for a successful implementation then the State expects the Vendor(s) to have the expertise necessary to identify the missing components and inform the State.

Question 12: Section VII, 7.4 - This item indicates "For working being performed on site in Jackson, the State will provide limited office workspace and communications necessary for implementation on MDE's infrastructure."

We understand the State's potential space limitations; however, from a budgeting and planning perspective, this information would help us understand how much on-site concurrency can be achieved.

Are space estimates available for the maximum number of concurrent on-site personnel?

Response: MDE can accommodate up to 6 staff onsite concurrently.

Question 13: Section VII, 7.15 - The RFP requires that "The vendor must prepare written deliverables to be validated by MDE prior to the actual development/customization." Further the RFP requires that the vendor include examples of each deliverable listed in paragraph that the vendor has been developed in the past, along with related project information.

Providing sample deliverables based on the vendor's methodology is not in question. However, in order for vendors to share content from another State, the other State(s) will need to agree to permit that sharing. This process is at the mercy of other States and may impact the RFP response period, or ability to comply with this requirement. In many cases, those deliverables would need to be scrubbed of sensitive content, which will impact the ability to meet the response period desired under this contract.

Can the vendor instead provide their own sample template material instead of content supplied in the past to other States?

Response: Templates are sufficient as long as the State is able to determine that the intended purpose for the deliverable will be met by the template.

Question 14: Section VII, 7.15 –

Placing the content within the actual RFP response will result in a response exceed 500 pages or more. We suggest that the response reference a location on the CD accompanying the response to review the associated material.

Where should this content requested per this item be included?

Response: **An electronic copy of the material is sufficient. Vendors must make certain that the material is easily identified and located on the CD. The State will not be responsible for “searching” for missing content.**

Question 15: Section VII, 7.18 - The RFP notes the States strong desire for the vendor to propose an implementation plan that ensures MDE can operate any new systems without undue burden.

During the early phase of the project, one would expect that roles and responsibilities be identified for involved State personnel, followed by skills assessments and recommended minimal training and certification requirements.

Is it the responsibility of the vendor to provide base product training under this contract? For example, if SQL Server 2008 R2 is the base product platform for the DW and BI components will administration training based on Microsoft Official Curriculum be expected under this contract?

Response: **No. The State does not expect the Vendor to provide training on products such as Microsoft SQL Server or Oracle; however, if the base product platform is not an industry standard product, the State expects product training.**

Question 16: Section VII, 8.2.2 - This Section requires the vendor provide ".... development and support of an Enterprise Data Warehouse/Business Intelligence System for MDE.." that includes "...technical, program and policy integration of educational data from various source systems maintained by MDE which are currently not integrated and operate independently of one another.."

Could MDE please clarify the intent of this requirement and its expectations? For example, is the scope of this requirement strictly metric definitions?

Response: **No. The expectation of this requirement is for the Vendor to provide expertise in bringing together the information from MDE’s disjointed and isolated systems including manual systems into the proposed Data Warehouse/Business Intelligence System. The Data Warehouse/Business Intelligence solution should have multiple paths to capture and abstract the data from these disjointed sources. The State expects a fully functioning warehouse solution with outputs defined for various stakeholders.**

Question 17: Section VII, 8.3.1 - The RFP requires that the vendor provide a detailed list, descriptions, and specifications of all hardware and communications equipment, including disk storage configuration, etc., that is required to implement the proposed solution.

This requirement impacts the size of each environment, the level of effort to provide quality assured data sets for these environments, and identity management for each environment.

Who will be responsible for the development, QA, and training database data sets definitions? Will the State provide the sample data for these environments, or is it the responsibility of the vendor? If it is the responsibility of the vendor, how many districts, schools, students, teachers, employees, etc. would need to be included to achieve satisfactory environmental constraints?

Response: **MDE will be responsible for providing data set information. The State is requiring the Vendor to clearly identify tasks needed for the MDE personnel to perform. The State will review the vendor's expectations for these requirements and match personnel skills for the project. Please note that MDE has limited available resources and consideration will be given to Vendors that require less MDE participation and clearly explain the roles for MDE personnel.**

Question 18: Section VII, 8.12.5, The RFP stipulates that as part of the DW/BI System Methodology Strategy Development, the vendor must integrate UserIDs and passwords with MDE's Active Directory (AD) architecture.

Does the current AD environment contain all UserIDs in scope of this project? If not, will this response require the capability of on-boarding internal/external users? Can the State's AD environment be used for password policy conformance?

Response: **Yes. The current AD environment contains all UserIDs in scope for this phase of the project. There will be no external user accessing information from the data warehouse during the initial phase. MDE requires the proposed DW/BI solution to provide internal application security.**

Question 19: Section VII, 8.12.5, The RFP stipulates that as part of the DW/BI System Methodology Strategy Development, the vendor must integrate UserIDs and passwords with MDE's Active Directory (AD) architecture.

Do local education agency (LEA) users have accounts in, or access to, the MDE Active Directory? Does MDE have an identity and access management system or plans to implement a system to enroll LEA users? Has MDE defined User roles for role-based access (e.g., Superintendent, Principal, Teacher, and Counselor)?

Response: **No. Role-based security should be a function of the proposed DW/BI application, not a function within Active Directory.**

Question 20: Section VII, 8.12.5, The RFP stipulates that as part of the DW/BI System Methodology Strategy Development, the vendor must integrate UserIDs and passwords with MDE's Active Directory (AD) architecture.

Does the State have an existing Federation service capability to supply SAML 2.0 claim tokens? Should some of the desired users not have existing AD accounts, would federated authentication and authorization be permitted?

Response: **No. MDE utilizes Active Directory for basic user authentication and passes the information to the appropriate application. MDE does not have a full-blown AD to accommodate all the stakeholders for an AD driven DW/BI System. MDE does not have methods and processes in place for the type of solution described.**

Question 21: Section VII, 8.15.3.4, The RFP requires that Module I include the incorporation of data from Excel Spreadsheets.

How many Excel Spreadsheets are in scope for Module I? What type of data is collected in those spreadsheets? Will these spreadsheets be replaced, or will they be an ongoing data source for the Data Warehouse?

Response: **The number of Excel spreadsheets is minimal; MDE estimates 10% or less. In most instances, the external system that supplies the information will simply send a data file to the DW/BI System and the Excel spreadsheets will be eliminated. However, there will be some Excel files that are not produced by an external system and these will still need to be incorporated into the proposed DW/BI System.**

Question 22: Section VII, 8.16.1.1, This Section requires the vendor to provide all related services costing for incorporating data currently housed in various MDE Modules.

Will the State provide more detail concerning the current databases listed under this section, e.g., number of years of historical data, database size, DBMS platform vendor, version, whether referential integrity is maintained, and whether MDE will consider modifying the sequence in which data is incorporated, etc.?

Response: **Phase 2 is an optional step that would involve retrieving data from 6 to 10 ancillary databases that make up approximately 10% of the remaining data. MDE will work with the awarded Vendor as indicated in Item 8.13 to identify this data.**

Question 23: Section VII, 8.17.2, The RFP states that it must have access to the QA environment and it will be used by the State to perform User Acceptance Testing (UAT) before applying them to the training and production environments.

This impacts the HW/SW costs associated with establishing the UAT environment.

Will the UAT environment be used for "performance" testing? If so, to what degree does UAT need to reflect production? Can the vendor propose role-level instance provisioning in UAT and extrapolate performance results based on load balanced implementations?

Response: MDE needs the UAT environment as true to the production environment as practically possible for all the test components including load balancing. However, MDE does not expect load testing should include the entire user community. Vendor should discuss smart utilization of State resources and provide a pathway for all the test components which will ensure a quantified confidence level.

Question 24: Section VII, 8.19.4, The RFP requires that the proposed solution provide "multi-level reporting" of statistics, processes, and errors.

Will the State clarify and provide details for this requirement? This can be interpreted too many ways. Is the intent of the requirement to target metrics by role?

Response: This statement emphasizes the fact that the DW/BI system should be geared towards multi-dimensional data abstraction rather than a total drill-down model; which in MDE's view best suits the need for an educational BI/Warehouse system. A few examples of these dimensions are time, demographic parameters, economic parameters, geographic location, and of course the traditional hierarchical organizational level. The statement is meant to steer away from a hierarchical design of the system.

Question 25: Section VII, 8.19.5, A stipulated requirement per this Section is the "...functionality to create 'publication ready' reports."

Is a list of all possible report names sufficient to meet the response requirements? Does the response to this requirement need to identify detailed categories, role targeting, and pipeline targets?

Response: A list of all available reports is sufficient.

Question 26: Section VII, 8.19.20, The State requires the vendor to describe the overall design and approach to creating ad hoc reports.

What level of detail is required to comply with a response? Is the State looking for a detailed explanation of the report generation process? If there are multiple reporting technologies possible, does each require explanation? Can the vendor reference URLs that contain this information?

Response: The State needs to have an understanding of the process required to generate reports including the tools recommended by the Vendor to best meet the requirements of RFP No. 3662. URLs alone are not acceptable because they are dynamic. Vendors are free to quote URLs as a reference document, but the contents of the response and not the URLs are the single source for our evaluation.

Question 27: Section VII, 8.19.23, The RFP dictates that the proposed solution allow any on-demand reports and queries to be routed to any allowed network accessible printer.

Printing is generally a "client-side" function. Whichever printers users have configured on their client programs determines the printing target.

Is the intent of this requirement to perform server side printing redirection?

Response: No, all printing will be done as a client-side function.

Question 28: Section VII, 8.20.6, The RFP requests, "... application and menu level security and the ability to setup of inquiry, add, update, and delete access by User and/or group."

What type of data modifications are anticipated outside of data loading processes from source data systems?

Response: The DW/BI System will need minimal data entry as per MDE's evaluation. Data modifications will include adding or changing user data, and system parametric information. However, MDE does not expect any true data (at student level, teacher level, or educational entity level) need to be entered into the warehousing system outside the Extract/Transform/Load (ETL) process.

Question 29: Section VII, 8.20.10, This item requires that the "...application security must not allow a UserID to be logged into the application more than once at any given point of time."

Limiting concurrent access from different devices is often problematic in today's IT environment. Users of the data warehouse will want no restriction on concurrency. Our experience has shown that restriction will generate complaints most often by decision makers who forgot they were logged on to their workstation/laptop, but are now trying to obtain data on their phone or tablet during a meeting.

If the intent of the requirement was for privileged access, an option is to consider letting the vendors respond with a recommended approach.

Will the State please provide the primary objective in defining this requirement?

Response: **The State will not relax this security aspect due to auditing concerns.**

Question 30: Section VII, 8.20.10, If this suggestion is acceptable, the number of anticipated administrative personnel will be required.

Should the intent of this requirement be to limit administrative access and support strong authentication, will the vendor propose smartcard authentication for administrative roles?

Response: **The State does not envision smart card access for administrative functions at this time.**

Question 31: Section VII, 8.22.2, The State requires that the selected vendor agree to work in cooperation with all public and private sector entities and vendors with whom the state contracts or partners.

How many public and private entities are there?

Response: **The State would have to do further research but believes the number is approximately 20.**

Question 32: Section VII, 8.22.7.1, The RFP requires that sensitive data be encrypted at any point at which it leaves MDE's local trusted network.

Which certificate vendor does the State have an existing contract with, i.e., VeriSign, Geotrust, Comodo, etc.? Should the vendor include the cost of acquiring public certificates for public facing sites in its response?

Response: **Item 8.22.7.1 has been deleted per Item 6 of this document.**

Question 33: Section VII, 8.22.7.1

Does the State have an internal certificate authority deployed within its infrastructure to support internal certificate distribution?

Response: **Item 8.22.7.1 has been deleted per Item 6 of this document.**

Question 34: Section VII, 8.22.7.1

Although this ability is possible, the time it takes to verify this capability prior to system access may affect consumer satisfaction. We would suggest the State require user acknowledgement of standard security practices prior to system access when entering into the portal for the first time. This balances the need between compliance, system access latency, and cross-platform capabilities.

Does the system need to verify that any User attempting to download reports have drive encryption enabled on their local systems?

Response: **Item 8.22.7.1 has been deleted per item 6 of this document.**

Question 35: Section VII, 8.23.1.3, The RFP stipulates that any solution proposed must be compatible with MDE's existing Storage Systems technology environment.

Augmenting the existing environment could perhaps lower the Total Cost of Ownership.

Will the State elaborate on the existing Storage platform in use, interfaces accepted (iSCSI, FC, FCoE, etc.), and existing remaining capacity?

Response: **Item 8.23 has been deleted per Item 7 of this document.**

Question 36: Section VII, 8.23.1.4, The RFP stipulates that any solution proposed must be compatible with MDE's existing backup systems technology environment.

Will the State elaborate on the existing backup solution including vendor, product, and version?

Response: **Item 8.23 has been deleted per Item 7 of this document.**

Question 37: Section VII, 8.23.1.5, The RFP stipulates that any solution proposed must be compatible with MDE's existing LAN/WAN network technology environment.

What vendor products are in use at the perimeter and data center for firewall, load balancing, switching, etc.? Does the current data center switching environment support VLAN tagging?

Response: **Item 8.23 has been deleted per Item 7 of this document.**

Question 38: Section VII, 8.23.1.6, The RFP stipulates the solution proposed must be compatible with MDE's existing Microsoft technology environment.

What forest functional level is the current AD running? Has the State started a migration to Windows Server 2008 R2? Is Hyper-V an accepted virtualization platform for the State?

Response: **Item 8.23 has been deleted per Item 7 of this document.**

Question 39: Section VII, 8.23.1.6

What products are in use today for patch management, inventory management, alert/monitoring management, and incident management? Does this response need to include integration with any of the existing management technologies? If critical management services are not currently present in production, can the vendor propose optional elements for inclusion in the RFP response?

Response: **Item 8.23 has been deleted per Item 7 of this document.**

Question 40: Section VII, 9.12, The RFP reference defines Acceptance Testing criteria and states the following, "These completion criteria are independent of the 30 business day test period."

Please clarify the meaning of "independent" in the above statement. Is the related time for testing meant to be concurrent or sequential?

Response: **Traditionally, MDE views testing in three compartments, the Unit Testing (or Objects testing by the developers), the Integrated Testing (or the process testing by the Mentor/Designer/Team Leaders), and the User Acceptance testing by the User Community which includes the load test, and goodness of fit tests etc. The "independent" refers to the User Acceptance Test phase. The 30 business day test period occurs after successful completion of all criteria defined in the ATP. The time will be sequential for the testing.**

Question 41: Section VII, 15.1, The RFP requires the vendor provide a disaster recovery plan for its proposed solution.

Please provide more details concerning the type of DR planning desired. If the SLA is based on an acceptable level of downtime, then service restoration approaches within the same data center may be feasible. If service restoration at a remote facility is desired, much more detail is required to respond to a level of effort estimation.

Does MDE have a secondary data center that will contain live servers for service transition?

Response: **No. MDE is looking for a high-level description of the recovery features included in the DW/BI System. The narrative should include the major steps required to restore the system in the event of a disaster. This system will not be considered critical.**

Question 42: Section VIII addresses the submission of cost information.

Has a budget been established for this Project, and if so, what is the amount?

Response: MDE will not release budget information for this project. However, all State Agency budgets are considered public record and may be viewed at www.dfa.state.ms.us.

Question 43: Exhibit A, Standard Contract, General - Will Seller be disqualified from consideration of Award of the Contract that results from this RFP if Seller takes General Exception to the terms and conditions of the proposed Standard Contract in the RFP, and proposes that the Services recommended in Seller's Proposal be governed pursuant to the terms and conditions of a Master Services Agreement already in place with the State, which agreement has been successfully utilized between the parties on similar engagements?

Response: Vendors should reference Section V, Proposal Exceptions for a description of the proposal exception process. The Vendor should note their preference for using an existing contract but should also note any exceptions with the Standard Contract attached as Exhibit A. The State cannot guarantee that any existing contract will be used in place of the Standard contract.

Question 44: Exhibit A, Standard Contract, Article 2 - In asking for a turnkey solution, does the State require that all of the solution elements be in one contract, or will it be acceptable to offer recommendations for hardware and software portions of the solution as part of Seller's proposal, identifying resources and potential costs, for the State to procure hardware and software through their normal procurement channels?

Response: Vendors should refer to Section VII, Items 8.3.1 and 17.1. Vendors should detail all components necessary and provide pricing. The State reserves the right to purchase all or part of the hardware, software, etc. from the awarded Vendor(s) or to use other procurement channels available to the State.

Question 45: Exhibit A, Standard Contract, Article 43 - Will Seller taking exception to Article 43 of the State's RFP Standard Contract, the section regarding "Retainage", preclude Seller from being awarded the contract resulting from this RFP?

Response: Vendors may take exception to any point in the RFP, with the exception of the mandatory requirements detailed in Section VII, Item 2, under the guidelines set forth in Section V, Item 1. Also in Section V, Item 2 discusses how exceptions are handled and the possible actions that may be taken.

Question 46: Exhibit A, Standard Contract, Article 45 - Will Seller taking exception to Article 45 of the State's RFP Standard Contract, the section regarding "Liquidated Damages", preclude Seller from being awarded the contract resulting from this RFP?

Response: Vendors may take exception to any point in the RFP, with the exception of the mandatory requirements detailed in Section VII, Item 2, under the guidelines set forth in Section V, Item 1. Also in Section V, Item 2 discusses how exceptions are handled and the possible actions that may be taken.

Question 47: Exhibit A, Standard Contract, Article 47 - Will Seller taking exception to Article 47 of the State's RFP Standard Contract, the section regarding "Escrow of Source Code", preclude Seller from being awarded the contract resulting from this RFP?

Response: Vendors may take exception to any point in the RFP, with the exception of the mandatory requirements detailed in Section VII, Item 2, under the guidelines set forth in Section V, Item 1. Also in Section V, Item 2 discusses how exceptions are handled and the possible actions that may be taken.

Question 48: Section VII; Technical Specifications, Subsection 7. Vendor Requirements, Item 7.2

We would like to clarify that the expectation is for the vendor to purchase, deploy, and provide a DBA for the database storage of the data warehouse component? Or is the requirement referring to other supporting databases such as a metadata repository and WebDav storage?

Response: The State views the DBA/Architect skills to be a critical resource needed for this project. The intention of this requirement specification is to ensure that the DBA is available fulltime for this project throughout the lifecycle of the project. The DBA should be able to provide expertise for both the data and metadata design from the abstraction phase to deployment phase.

Question 49: Section VII; Technical Specifications Subsection 8; Technical Requirements Item 8.3 Infrastructure Requirements, Question 8.3.1

Is there any additional information MS DOE can provide regarding estimated data volumes, usage patterns, and concurrent users. We can make certain assumptions but any additional information would be very useful particularly regarding data volumes. Requirements gathering is a part of the RFP and this may seem like a circular question but if there is any proxies that can be utilized such as the data volumes and utilization patterns of the existing systems, particularly MSIS, it will be helpful.

Response: MDE does not have any additional information. The usage for the DW/BI System will be seasonal and should not have a high volume of users at any one time. MDE will work with the awarded Vendor during the requirements gathering phase to provide this information.

Question 50: Section VII; Technical Specifications Subsection 8; Technical Requirements Item 8.23 Compatibility, Question 8.23.1

Are there any more specifics that can be shared regarding these existing systems?

Response: **Item 8.23 has been deleted per Item 7 of this document.**

Question 51: Section IV, Legal and Contractual Requirements - item #30, page 21, under “Terms of Software License Agreement” and the reference to a perpetual license agreement.

Will MDE entertain a vendor offer that is only offered as an annual subscription license, but supported under a mutually agreed upon Master License Agreement?

Response: **Yes, if the proposed solution is hosted by MDE and costed over 5 years; however, Vendor must remember that any custom code would be the property of MDE and could be shared with other States per the terms of the SLDS Grant.**

Question 52: Section IV Legal and Contractual Requirements - item 37, page 23 - Under performance bond

Does the Vendor's Performance Bond need to be equal to the amount of the vendor's total proposal, including the total software and consulting services amounts?

Response: **Yes.**

Question 53: Section VII, Technical Specifications - item 3.1, page 34 - Under project funding

What is the total amount of funds that MDE has been granted by the US DOE to fund this project? Is MDE's intention to have those funds only cover Module 1? Or do those funds need to encompass all the additional modules as well? Is MDE adding any additional State of Mississippi funds, outside of the grant from the US DOE?

Response: **MDE will not release budget information for this project. However, all State Agency budgets are considered public record and may be viewed at www.dfa.state.ms.us.**

Question 54: Section VII - 8.3.1, page 45 - Under hardware requirements

Would MDE consider an offer from a vendor to provide the solution as a hosted solution?

Response: **No, the associated grants do not allow it.**

Question 55: Section 7

Can exceptions be taken to the Mandatory Legal Provisions in section 7 of the RFP?

Response: No.

Question 56: If a Vendor fails to sign the mutually negotiated contract, will the Vendor's security bond be returned?

Response: As stated in Section IV, Item 36 *Proposal Bond*, "The security will be forfeited in the event the awarded Vendor, at any time during the contract negotiation process, refuses to honor commitments made in its proposal, reneges on pricing, takes exception to any term or condition that was not addressed in the Vendor's written proposal, or fails to execute a contract as anticipated in the RFP and the Vendor's proposal, including documented exceptions, within fifteen (15) working days after the Vendor's initial receipt of the project contract from ITS, unless an extension is agreed to by ITS."

Question 57: Section 16.1

Section 16.1 of the RFP states that USDOE reserves the right to use any custom built software and associated documentation and share such software and documentation with other states. The term "share" needs further definition. Will the other states access and use the software and associated documentation? To how many states are they referring? For example, if MDE purchases a vendors BI software, is the assumption that the "sharing" of the actual BI technology will be delivered to these other states?

Response: Yes. Terms of the SLDS Grant require that USDOE maintains rights to use any custom built software and associated documentation. Any State that wishes to use the code developed as part of MDE's DW/BI System may request the code.

Question 58: Section 3.3

Does MDE have the XML schema used by MSIS for the specific student and personnel data elements? Can this be provided to the vendors?

Response: MDE has XML schema for input to MSIS; however there is no output schema for data from MSIS.

Question 59: Section 5.12

Does MDE have more details of their current system, both hardware and software? If so, can the vendors receive a schematic? The schematic should include information about the network access of all data bases as well as the size of all hardware. Will we be able to utilize existing MDE hardware for the vendor's solution, or is it mandated that MDE purchase new hardware for this project, or the vendor include new hardware in each of their proposals?

Response: MDE is seeking a DW/BI System that is capable of integrating with standard networking practices. MDE has considered the existing environment and believes that it would be best to establish this DW/BI System in a standalone environment.

Question 60: Section 7.5.1

Can MDE provide the vendors a time schedule? If not, can MDE share with the vendors their expectations.

Response: MDE will work with the awarded Vendor to establish a mutually acceptable Project Work Plan.

Question 61: Section 7.6.3.3 and 7.6.3.4

Please provide details of the Storage Systems and Backup Systems MDE currently uses.

Response: MDE utilizes an EMC VNX5300 SAN storage solution which supports FC or iSCSI and Symantec's Backup Exec, versions 2010 and 12.5. EMC Data Domain storage is the primary storage for backup. Tape is currently used for offsite storage.

Question 62: Sections 8.2.1, 8.4.1

If there are additional reports or files need by the federal government other than those listed on the web site provided in section 8.19.32.1, please provide details of those reports. What are the reports required by the state?

Response: MDE is not aware of any additional reports or files.

Question 63: Section 8.2.3

What are the details of the data and reports?

Response: Please refer to Section VII, Item 8.10. The State expects the Vendor to work with the appropriate State staff to define the data.

Question 64: Section 8.3.1

In the past 10 years what is the change in number of employees of MDE, for each year, by department. How many new schools have been built in each of the past 10 years? What type of schools are they?

Response: MDE does not believe this information is relevant to the current project.

Question 65: Section 8.4.4

What pieces of the Federal and in-state reporting is collected manually? What is the current collection method? What is the current reporting method?

Response: Most of the data collection is automated; however, data from various external systems must often be formatted (using Excel spreadsheets) to meet Federal reporting requirements.

Question 66: Section 8.14

To completely answer this section we will need a detailed understanding of the entire organization, who uses what data, who is responsible for updating all data points, who generates what reports, etc.

Response: The State expects the Vendor(s) to be conversant with standard State Education Agency operations methods and processes. The exploration phase should provide more insight to this task; however the State is asking the Vendor(s) to commit to this task and allocate resources in your plan. Vendors can refer to the MDE website for more information regarding the agency, <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/>.

Question 67: Section 8.14.1.1

How often should data synchronization occur?

Response: Synchronization is expected to occur on a monthly basis.

Question 68: Section 8.19.4

Please provide details of the statistics, processes and errors of interest.

Response: Standard educational statistics processes, and possible errors and anomalies in data can only be revealed by a detailed study of the existing systems, and

State Educational Agency knowledge. MDE expects the expertise of the Vendor in the exploration phase to assist them with this task.

Question 69: Section 8.19.5

Could you please define the content expectations of the requested “publication ready” reports?

Response: These are reports which can be fully deployed on the web with industry standard abilities such as download, print, standard look and feel and adherence to MDE standards. It also should include date/time of the report, date/time of the data, and the scope of the data. This is not an exclusive list of requirements to meet the definition of publication ready, but some of the major requirements for MDE.

Question 70: Exhibit B

School Payment System (SPS) what is the size in MB of this data base?

Response: The oracle export dump file for this database is 729 MB.

Question 71: Exhibit B

Educator Licensure Management System (ELMS); What is the version of SQL Server? What is the size in MB of this data base?

Response: The Educator Licensure System has two production databases. One is 228,748.88MB and the other is 346.06 MB.

Question 72: Exhibit B

Migrant Student Data (MIS 2000) (M-SIX;) What is the version of Firebird? What is the size in MB of this data base?

Response: The Migrant Student Database is 72 MB.

Question 73: Exhibit B

Child Nutrition System (OCEAN); What is the version of SQL Server and what is the size of in MB of this data base?

Response: The Child Nutrition Database (OCeaN) is 3.5 GB. There is a transaction log database that is 9.0 GB in size. There are other ancillary databases that accompany OCeaN, such as the model/master databases but combined they are less than 1GB.

Question 74: Section 5.6, “The Vendor will perform all work associated with this project in Jackson, Mississippi.”

What is the expected percentage of time that the vendor’s PM needs to be in Jackson? Is it 100%, or is there a reasonable amount of flexibility? Will VPN access be available, for either the lead PM, or other supporting technical/consulting roles for the project? For example, if the vendor provides a PM for 100% availability in Jackson, can Consultants and/or Technical Architects obtain VPN access for additional work to be done offsite?

Response: MDE believes that the Project Manager and the Architect should be engaged on a day-to-day basis for a successful warehousing project. Though MDE will provide VPN connections to temporary consultants on an as-needed basis, MDE expects the critical staff to be present in Jackson. If the Vendor plans some work to be done offsite or via VPN access, the reasons and cost-effectiveness of this should be detailed.

Question 75: Section 7.3 “MDE requires the Vendor to have staff on-site during various stages of the project including, but not limited to, gap analysis, design, configuration/implementation, training, technical knowledge transfer, and system go-live. The Vendor must fully discuss the approach and percentage of commitment of staff and time on-site versus off-site for the duration of this project.”

Does the on-site requirement include a Project Manager?

Response: Yes. See the response to Question 74.

Question 76: Section II, #8. 8. “The Vendor may intersperse their response following each RFP specification but must not otherwise alter or rekey any of the original text of this RFP.”

To confirm, is it permissible for vendors to provide proposal responses in our own proposal template as long as we do not modify section/question numbering, or question content?

Response: No. The State requires Vendors to respond using the document provided on the ITS website, <http://www.its.ms.gov/rfps/3662.shtml>.

Question 77: What percentage of your in-house Development Staff is Oracle Trained?

Response: MDE has personnel that work in an Oracle environment on a day-to-day basis. However, Oracle includes considerable topics and MDE may not have skills set for all the components of Oracle. Most of MDE's staff has a working knowledge of Oracle technology.

Question 78: Section VII.6 Vendor Qualifications item 6.5, requests a Public Accountant Certified Annual Report. Can a company's Tax Return be submitted in lieu of this request?

Response: No.

Question 78: What percentage of your in-house Development Staff is MS-SQL Trained?

Response: There are some MDE personnel with a working knowledge of MS-SQL. MDE has a small number of MS-SQL based systems. Vendors should understand that MDE has limited IT staff and will not be providing development resources to assist the Vendor.

Question 79: Section VII Technical Specifications, Paragraph 13.15 states, "The Vendor must include in their *Cost Information Submission* a separate line item cost for each type of training identified in this section and recommended by the Vendor."

What is meant by "each type of training"?

Response: The State envisions that different training will be needed for the following, but not limited to, groups of users: system administrators, database personnel, application users, district users, and main office.

Question 80: Specifically what total number of users is anticipated for Public access? (Section 8.15.4.3).

Response: Public access is not planned for Phase I. MDE has decided to move the requirement for providing public access to a future, optional phase. Please see Items 2 and 2 above for revisions to RFP No. 3662.

Question 81: What is the maximum total number of public users expected concurrently at any given time?

Response: See response to question 80.

Question 82: Requirement 8.19.14 states, "The vendor must develop up to 100 customized reports as identified by MDE, the cost of which is included in the proposed cost for this RFP."

The RFP also mentions dashboards (8.13), but has no mention of the number of dashboards. Are dashboards required? If so, how many?

Response: Yes. MDE expects the Vendor to propose the number and justification of the process used to determine the number of dashboards.

Question 83: Does ITS or MDE have an ETL tool currently in use?

Response: No.

Question 84: What data modeling tools and their respective versions are currently in use?

Response: MDE does not use any data modeling tools.

Question 85: Does the state prefer an Oracle or a SQL Server based solution?

Response: MDE wants to stay technology neutral to attract the best possible solution.

Question 86: What licensed software will the state provide as a resource for this project? For example, are there existing DBMS, Operating System, or other software packages the vendor can leverage?

Response: MDE has License for enterprise level Oracle and SQL Server database software. MDE will provide permission to use these licenses within financial and contractual guidelines that must be adhered.

Question 87: For software licensing pricing, is there a published rate sheet that reflects the license charges the state would pay compared to the retail prices most commercial solutions would carry?

Response: No.

Question 88: What development languages do the state developers currently use? What are the approximate competency levels of the personnel using these languages (eg. Novice, junior, mid-level, senior, expert)

Response: MDE uses Oracle forms and reports as the major development tool. MDE also uses VB/.Net SQL server in a limited fashion. However, MDE has limited IT staff and will not be in a position to provide development resources.

Question 89: Does MDE/ITS have an inventory of current interfaces that must be replicated in the LDS? This should include the technology capabilities of each interfacing system such as file only, web services, etc.

Response: No. Vendors should refer to Section VII, Item 8.4.5 for a list of the systems and database that MDE must collect data from.

Question 90: Do they have data models they of the systems that will provide data to the LDS?

Response: No data models are available.

Question 91: What are the sizes in terms of max records per table, size of data files, etc., of the systems to load into the warehouse? The current inventory is incomplete.

Response: Vendors may reference Exhibit D, MSIS Database, for additional statistics. Vendors must gauge the needed effort and risks associated with the project based on their judgment and experience with the State Educational Agencies (SEA).

Question 92: Does the state have a way to uniquely identify students? If so, what is the quality of this identifier in terms of multiple identifiers for the same student or different students re-using the same identifier?

Response: Yes. MDE has a unique Id for each student which is not re-used and the quality is good.

Question 93: How many SLDS implementations does the state expect for a vendor to be considered qualified?

Response: The State has not specified a certain number of SLDS implementations in order to be qualified.

Question 94: Requirement 7.7

Specific positions are not identified as Key Personnel. Is it up to the state to identify key personnel positions and staff?

Response: The Vendor must provide the information requested in Section VII, Item 7.7 for all personnel that they believe to be key positions. The State may request additional information if they believe key positions are missing.

Question 95: Requirement 7.15:

Are there published templates for the expected content and format for each of the deliverables listed in this section? If so, can these please be released as part of the ITB background information?

Response: MDE does not have published templates. MDE will work with the awarded Vendor to review and agree on a mutually acceptable format for all deliverables.

Question 96: Requirement 8.2:

What exactly is meant by the requirement “Augmenting the current data collected and maintained by MDE to support state and federal reporting requirements?” Is this meant to be a data integration requirement or must the vendor provide data entry mechanism for education entities to provide missing data elements?

Response: The State does not envision any data entry for this project. The purpose of the project is to improve the ability to meet State and Federal reporting requirements by combining data from disparate systems into a single DW/BI System.

Question 97: What is the list of EDEN EdFacts reports the state intends to provide from the LDS? Is the vendor to provide a mechanism for producing these reports or must the vendor actually implement these reports such as N029, N039, etc.?

Response: Yes. Actual implementation of Federal reports in totality is a critical part of this project.

Question 98: Requirement 8.14.3:

All rules engines require supporting code for implementation. For example, each rule must have support code to retrieve data, update data, and commit transactions when a rule set successfully fires without error. At what level of automation is the state expecting for modifications without a developer? Possible areas of automation include:

1. Adding additional reference values
2. Modifying parameterized values to drive queries such as dates, ranges of values, etc.
3. Modifying permissions

Response: MDE believes the rules engines design and development is a crucial element of the DW/BI solution. MDE is looking to the Vendor to provide information on how much parameterization is possible in a cost-effective way, both in terms of acquisition and simplicity in operations and maintenance.

Question 99: Unfortunately, rules engines are not code generators. Tools such as BPEL engines can allow for compiled workflows without writing a line of code, but the complexity of these tools is daunting for business analysts. Also, even BPEL engines require a DBA to provide for database modifications and maintenance. Assuming a workflow based tool is acceptable, how much training with the state allow for business analysts to become competent with this tool?

Most rules engines and workflow tools have substantial performance penalties. Will the state be willing to accept the additional hardware costs necessary to support these tools?

Response: **MDE wants the Vendor to specify the level of automation and parameterization, keeping the full lifecycle cost for the State as the prime factor.**

Question 100:Requirement 8.15.4.3:

What is the expected number of users for the general public access?

Response: **See response to question 80.**

Question 101:Requirement 8.15.4.3

Will these users be anonymous or must each public user register with the public web site?

Response: **See response to question 80.**

Question 102:Requirement 8.18.1:

Does the state have a standard web site evaluation tool or service for establishing 508 compliance?

Response: **No.**

Question 103:Requirement 8.18.2.1:

The version of Java is listed is “version 24 or higher.” Is the vendor to assume this is Java 6?

Response: **Yes. This requirement should have read “Version 6, update 24”. The RFP has been amended per Item 4 of this document.**

Question 104:Requirement 8.18.2.1

Should this be 32 or 64 bit Java?

Response: **It should be 64 Bit Java.**

Question 105:Requirement 8.18.4.2

Some vendors have strong shared services that would greatly simplify the management of certain tasks such as identity management, security, and unique identifiers. Assuming all of the application servers and database servers were hosted with the state, at what level is a shared services model acceptable to

provide solution components such as federated security and single individual searches?

Response: **MDE does not intend to utilize a shared services model.**

Question 106:Requirement 8.19.10

All reporting technologies have some sort of design tool that requires a “development” and “deployment” phase. Also, anything that requires a database change will also require a DBA. Could the state please elaborate on the level of customization that can be applied with “no special technical skills” and “no programming changes?”

Response: **MDE believes that a well-designed parameterized system will need less DBA and developer skills. MDE intends to acquire a system with the best value.**

Question 107:Requirement 8.19.11

Parameterized ad hoc queries are easily implemented in most systems. At what level must the internal database be exposed to provide ad hoc query access?

Response: **MDE believes that most DBAs will recommend to expose views rather than core tables in a warehouse system, and the design of well-groomed views are the single critical architectural tasks in a DW/BI System. This is one way of providing the desired access to the user community and still not exposing the database to the user community at the native table level. The Vendor should propose and explain if other methods of providing secure ad-hoc query access to the database are recommended.**

Question 108:Requirement 8.19.11

Users have a tendency to develop poorly performing queries such as joining two very large data sets with poorly defined joins or functions in the query predicates. Will the state accept a dedicated ad hoc query environment to segment off the risk of ad hoc queries from normal production operations?

Response: **MDE expects to pre-empt this concern by: a) properly design designated paths (such as views as described in the previous question), and b) envisioning as many queries as possible in the exploratory phase of the project.**

Question 109:Page 34 section 3.1

The State indicates that the State is seeking hardware (if required). How are the vendors to determine if hardware is required? Can the State provide details as to the current hardware platforms and current capacity to take on the system desired?

Without this information, it is not clear how the vendors can determine if hardware is required.

Response: **MDE intends to purchase separate hardware for this DW/BI solution. Please see the response to Question 59.**

Question 110:Page 36 section 5.6

The work that vendor personnel will perform over time will vary. As is often the case for project like this, a person may at any point in time be performing work that does not require face to face interaction with State personnel. Is it acceptable that while a majority of the work will be performed in Jackson, that during the times when interactions with State personnel is not require, that work may be performed away from Jackson?

Response: **The State understands that there may be situations where personnel working remotely are needed to solve certain issues; however, the State expects these situations to be limited to temporary consulting. Please refer to the response for question 74. If remote working arrangements are planned for extended periods, then the Vendor must provide details justifying the reason and cost.**

Question 111:Page 36 section 5.9

Can the State provide a list of State personnel that will be “receiving” knowledge transfer along with the skills and levels of proficiency of relevance to their capability to “receive” knowledge transfer from the vendor?

Response: **MDE anticipates the following MIS staff to receive knowledge transfer from the vendor: Database Administrator (1), Assistant Database Administrator (1), Lead Business Systems Analyst serving as the MSIS Manager (1), System Administrator (2) Programmer Analyst (5), Senior Business Systems Analyst (2), and Business Systems Analyst (2).**

Question 112:Page 37 section 5.12

Can the State please elaborate on “functionality not covered in this RFP” and provide some bounds for this? It is not clear how the vendor can be responsible for something that is not outlined in the RFP.

Response: **Please see response to Question 11.**

Question 113:Page 43 section 7.19.6

Can the State elaborate on the criteria for meeting the standard of minimum disruption and interference?

Response: State personnel have their daily duties and responsibilities to provide services to the schools and district personnel. However, this project is vital for MDE and they will attempt to provide assistance needed for the project. The intent of this statement is to let the Vendors know that personnel assigned for this project have other duties to perform in addition to the project.

Question 114:Page 44 section 7.21

The RFP calls for the vendor to provide hourly rates yet in this section, the State is indicating that payments will be made on a deliverable-based schedule. Is the State asking for an hourly / time and materials arrangement or a fixed price deliverables based arrangement?

Response: Please see Section VII, Item 17 *Cost Proposal* and Section VIII, *Cost Information Submission*. Vendors must propose a fixed price, deliverables-based proposal. Vendors must also provide a fully loaded hourly change order rate.

Question 115:Page 41 section 7.9

In follow-up to the previous question, if the State is asking for a fixed price deliverables based arrangement, the vendor must have the latitude and ability to control the resources assigned to meet the deliverables. This may involve removing, adding and/or replacing resources. If the arrangement is fixed price deliverables based, what is the rationale for the “written approval from MDE”?

Response: The State must have a guarantee that the Vendor will not change personnel on a frequent basis. Continuity of project staff is key to the success of a project. New staff must be brought up to speed which can cause delays in the project schedule and increased cost. The State will not deny reasonable requests or changes such as illness or resignation of Vendor personnel.

Question 116:Page 50 section 8.14.3

Can the State provide a list of sample business rules changes for which this functionality is required?

Response: Federal reporting rules are subject to change each school year. The following link to the EdFacts Business Rules Guide may assist Vendors in understanding the types of changes:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/business-rules-guide.html>.
Vendors may also consult the following link for additional information regarding EdFacts reporting and file specifications: www.ed.gov/edfacts. State Education Authorities are provided a Guide each year with file submission requirements and modifications for the school year.

Question 117:Page 52 section 8.17

Do the systems that hold the source data for this solution also maintain these same four environments?

Response: Yes.

Question 118:Page 55 section 8.19.14

Can the State provide further details as to the complexity of the 100 customized reports desired (low complexity, medium complexity, high complexity)?

Response: **MDE has not compiled this information. The State expects the Vendor to use their best judgement based on the current tools available in the platform being proposed, the type of the system (BI Reports), and the business (education).**

Question 119:Page 52 section 8.16.2

“Phase III: Up to 500 users from schools and school districts”. Does number of users stay the same (i.e. 500) for Module IV, Module V, and Module VI?

Response: **MDE estimated 500 to be the upper limit for these modules.**

Question 120:Would the State consider proposed revisions to any of the Mandatory Legal Provisions listed in Section 7 beginning on page 15 of the RFP? Specifically our organization has concerns surrounding the liability and warranty requirements imposed on the Vendor without the opportunity for negotiation.

Response: **Vendors may take exception to any point in the RFP, with the exception of the mandatory requirements detailed in Section VII, Item 2, under the guidelines set forth in Section V, *Proposal Exceptions*.**

Question 121:How many EdFACTS/EDEN/Federal reports/files will need to be created for Phase 1?

Response: **MDE requires that all the reports listed on the website provided in Section VII, Item 8.19.32.1 be provided in Phase I, with the caveat that modification and additions are sometimes required by the Federal entities that govern the reporting.**

Question 122:In requirement 8.19.14 100 reports are mentioned. Is this count of reports expected to be developed over all phases of the project or for certain phases of the project mentioned in requirement 8.16? How many of the reports are public reports, how many are district/school reports, and how many are federal reports?

Response: All reports are expected to be part of Phase I and at this point, none of the reports are for public access. The idea is to maximize efficiency by designing with both the DW/BI and MSIS systems in mind. Existing reports in MSIS should not be recreated and when possible, reports should be designed so that they may be used by both systems, MSIS and DW/BI. MDE has provided a list of potential reports in Exhibit E.

Question 123: Can you provide an example of one SIMPLE report, one MEDIUM report, and one COMPLEX report you are expecting from this new system as well as provide the estimated number of each that will need to be provided?

Response: MDE will work with the awarded Vendor to review the reporting requirements.

Question 124: Is a web based Reporting Portal envisioned to be a part of Phase 1? What public facing content is required for Phase 1? What secured school district content is required for Phase 1?

Response: All reports will be limited to the MDE main office, schools, and districts. There are no plans for public access in Phase I.

Question 125: What is the expected date for which Phase 1's deliverables should be in production?

Response: Please refer to the updated Project Schedule in Item 1 of this document.

Question 126: What are the High Availability requirements for the system?

Response: Today's technology can deliver zero downtime systems at acceptable cost levels. MDE will pay close attention to self-maintaining, automated, object-oriented design and development methodology with sufficient back-end automated processes to ensure a zero or near-zero downtime system.

Question 127: Based on the fact the response time is in the middle of summer vacation schedules and the 4th of July Holliday, Aspect would like to request a 30 day extension to the response date of July 28th.

Response: Please see the revised Procurement Project Schedule in Item 1 above.

Question 128: Can MDE extend the deadline for proposals?

Response: Please see the revised Procurement Project Schedule in Item 1 above.

Question 129: Can MDE offer an additional question and answer period if there are additional questions that arise from the first set of answers?

Response: Please see the revised Procurement Project Schedule in Item 1 above.

Question 130: Will there be additional Staff assigned to the project?

Response: MDE does not have plans to add staff to the DW/BI project.

Question 131: Who will perform the extracts from the existing source systems and data loading?

Response: ETL is a part of the RFP.

Question 132: Are there specific list of data elements that MDE is looking to collect?

Response: No, MDE expects this to be part of exploration phase.

Question 133: Is there a data dictionary for each of the source systems mentioned in 8.4.5 (page 46)?

Response: MDE will provide data dictionaries for each of the source systems to the awarded Vendor.

Question 134: As per 8.4.5 on page 46, when will the existing documentation be made available?

Response: MDE has provided additional information in Exhibit D, MSIS Database.

Question 135: As per 3.1 (page 46), What reporting capabilities does MDE have currently?

Response: MDE will work with the awarded Vendor to review a complete list of the reports needed in the DW/BI System. Vendor should refer to Section VII, Item 8.19 for a list of reporting requirements. MDE uses Oracle discoverer and Crystal Reports to generate many reports.

Question 136: As per 3.1 (page 46), can you please clarify on "Augment" the reporting capabilities of the MSIS?

Response: MSIS produces several reports. The intent of this statement was to strengthen the reporting of MSIS by smartly designing the new reports. The idea is to maximize efficiency by designing with both systems in mind. Existing reports in MSIS should not be recreated and when possible, reports should be designed so that they may be used by both systems, MSIS and DW/BI.

Question 137: As per 7.15.1.3, (p42) Can you provide examples of data modeling deliverables are expected?

Response: Standard data modeling processes have ample examples of data modeling samples. MDE prefers a pictorial representation using an industry standard

method, such as Ross or Grady Booch etc. MDE also needs a description of the model so that non-DBA personnel can understand the data model and can verify the validity of the model. MDE has not done it in-house because they expect it to be a vendor task.

Question 138: As per 7.17 (p42), How many staff is it anticipated will be assigned to the project post-implementation.

Response: MDE expects the system to have sound automated trigger enabled back-end processes to eliminate person dependency. It also should take care of the house-keeping, cleaning, memory-management, and space management tasks with automated processes. With these expectations, MDE does not anticipate assigning more than two personnel on a part-time basis to this system in the post implementation period.

Question 139: As per 8.4.5 (page 46), What is the database platforms of the source systems?

Response: Most of the systems are Oracle or SQL-Server database. The main system, MSIS, is an Oracle 10g environment.

Question 140: As per 8.4.5, (page 53), Please clarify the JAVA version.

Response: Please see the response to Question 103.

Question 141: As per 5.6, (page 36), Does this include mapping exercises, requirements gathering, design, development, data extraction, status meetings, and other tasks that could be performed with equal rigor by phone / web conference / remote access by offsite resources?

Response: MDE strongly encourages all the tasks to be done locally. MDE will not agree to do any of the exploration tasks with remote technological tools such as web conference and/or remote access. Please see the responses to questions 74 and 110.

Question 142: As per 5.6, (page 36), Does this include vendor-provided project manager?

Response: Yes.

Question 143: As per 5.11 (p37), Does this include findings, design, documentation incorporated as part of any enhancements/modifications to vendor's COTS solution?

Response: Yes.

Question 144: As per 8.14.1.2,(page 49) Can you clarify on the order precedence for data conflicts

Response: Data precedence depends on the level of confidence of the source of the data. As a rule, we will have MSIS database as the primary source for student, and personnel data, SPS system as the financial data. The other sources should be individually evaluated with reference to the data entity, and decided in the exploration phase.

Question 145: As per 8.18.3 (page53) Please elaborate; customizable in what way? Do you mean “configurable”? Does this refer to “ad-hoc” reporting, or something else?

Response: Yes, we mean configurable.

Question 147: As per 12.12, (page 66) Our support team utilizes a support ticket system that facilitates ticket creation and communication by email. Will this suffice?

Response: No.

Question 148: As per 8.2.3, (page 45). Can MDE describe in more detail what data are required to be provided to the MSLDS?

Response: Please refer to federal education website, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/>, for more information regarding the requirements and goals of SLDS program.

Question 149: On page 59, Can MDE outline the sources, platforms and data structures of those sources?

Response: MDE will work with the awarded Vendor during the exploration phase to identify this information.

RFP responses are due September 30, 2011, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Donna Hamilton at 601-432-8114 or via email at Donna.Hamilton@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 39005

EXHIBIT D

MSIS Database

Database Type
Object Relational Database

An **object-relational database** (ORD), or **object-relational database management system** (ORDBMS), is a database management system (DBMS) similar to a relational database, but with an object-oriented database model: objects, classes and inheritance are directly supported in database schemas and in the query language. In addition, it supports extension of the data model with custom data-types and methods.

Example of an Object-Oriented Database Model.

An object-relational database can be said to provide a middle ground between relational databases and *object-oriented databases* (OODBMS). In object-relational databases, the approach is essentially that of relational databases: the data resides in the database and is manipulated collectively with queries in a query language; at the other extreme are OODBMSes in which the database is essentially a persistent object store for software written in an object-oriented programming language, with a programming API for storing and retrieving objects, and little or no specific support for querying.

MSIS - Statistics

- 652 Tables
- 9165 Columns
- 1053 Indices
- 269 Triggers
- 201 Procedures
- 66 Functions
- 254 Scripts
- 174 Forms
- 280 Reports

MSIS – Statistics.. Contd...

- 240 Gb Of Data
- Time based Partitioned Tables
- Online Availability – 6 AM to 7 PM
- Batch Cycle 7 PM to 6 AM
- Cron Based Automated Procedures
- Email Based Exception Processing
- Semi-Automated Tuning
- 3 Available images
- Sun/Solaris 10 Platform /Oracle 10g Database
- Xml based school data interface

MSIS – Data...

- Static Data
 - Districts
 - Schools
 - Infrastructure
 - Codes
 - Programs
 - Courses

.....
- Semi Static Data
 - Teachers
 - Employees
 - Users
 - Credentials

.....
- Transactions Data
 - Classes
 - Student Related Changes
 - Teacher Related Changes

.....
- Holding Area Data
 - Students
 - Classes
 - Demographics
 - Admissions
 - Graduations
 - Class Promotions
 - Transportations
 - Disciplines

.....
- Online Entries/Interfaces Data
 - MDHS
 - Health
 - SPED Data
 - Voc_Ed Data
 - Licensure

.....

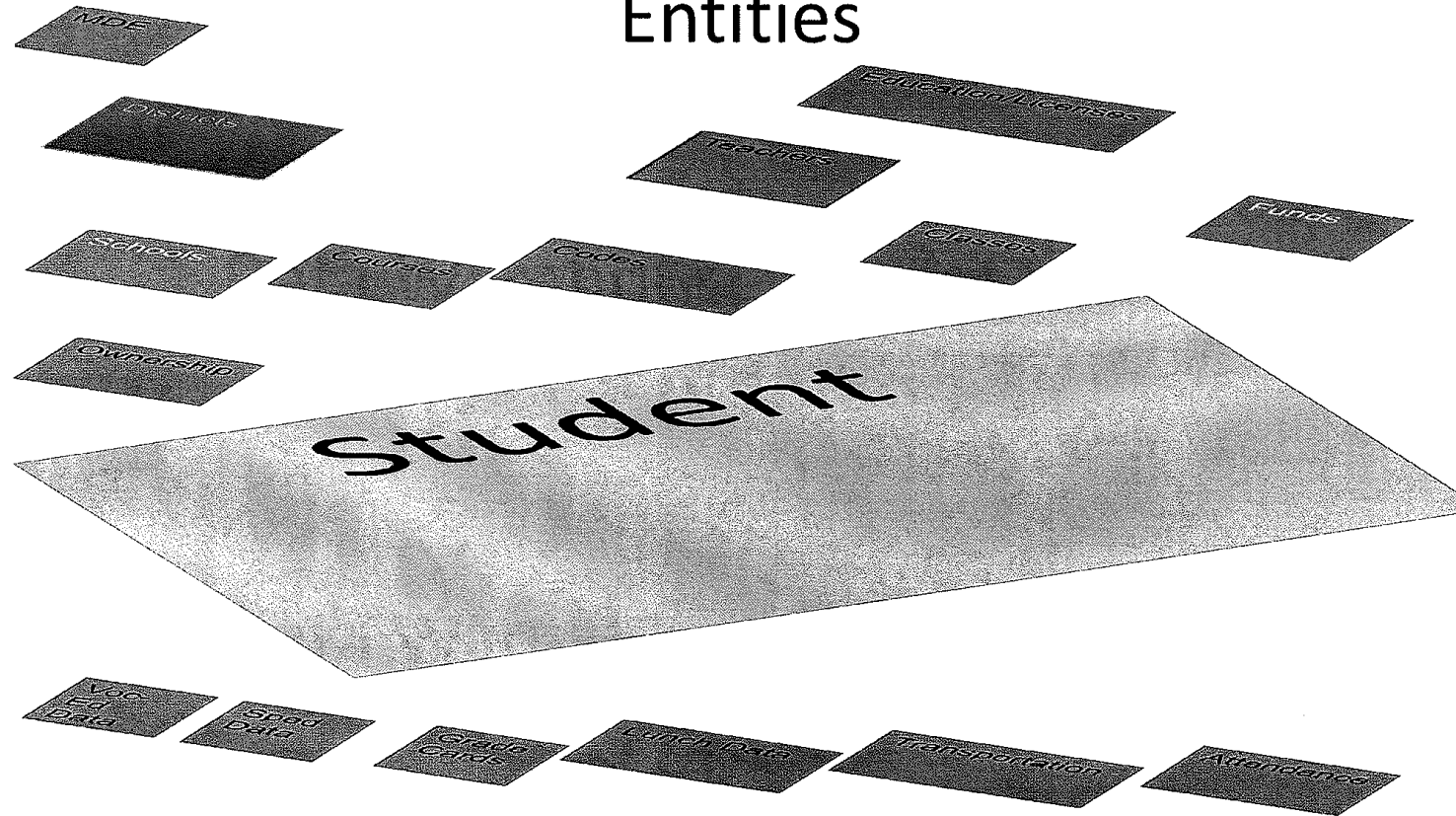
MSIS – Processes...

- XML Process
 - School Districts send the data in xml files which are updated nightly
 -
- Interfaces
 - Interfaces from MDHS, MSDH, Licensure are automatically retrieved and updated
 -
- Online Transaction Entry
 - MSIS Forms are used for correction/entry of many forms of data including SPED, Teachers Data, and students data
 -

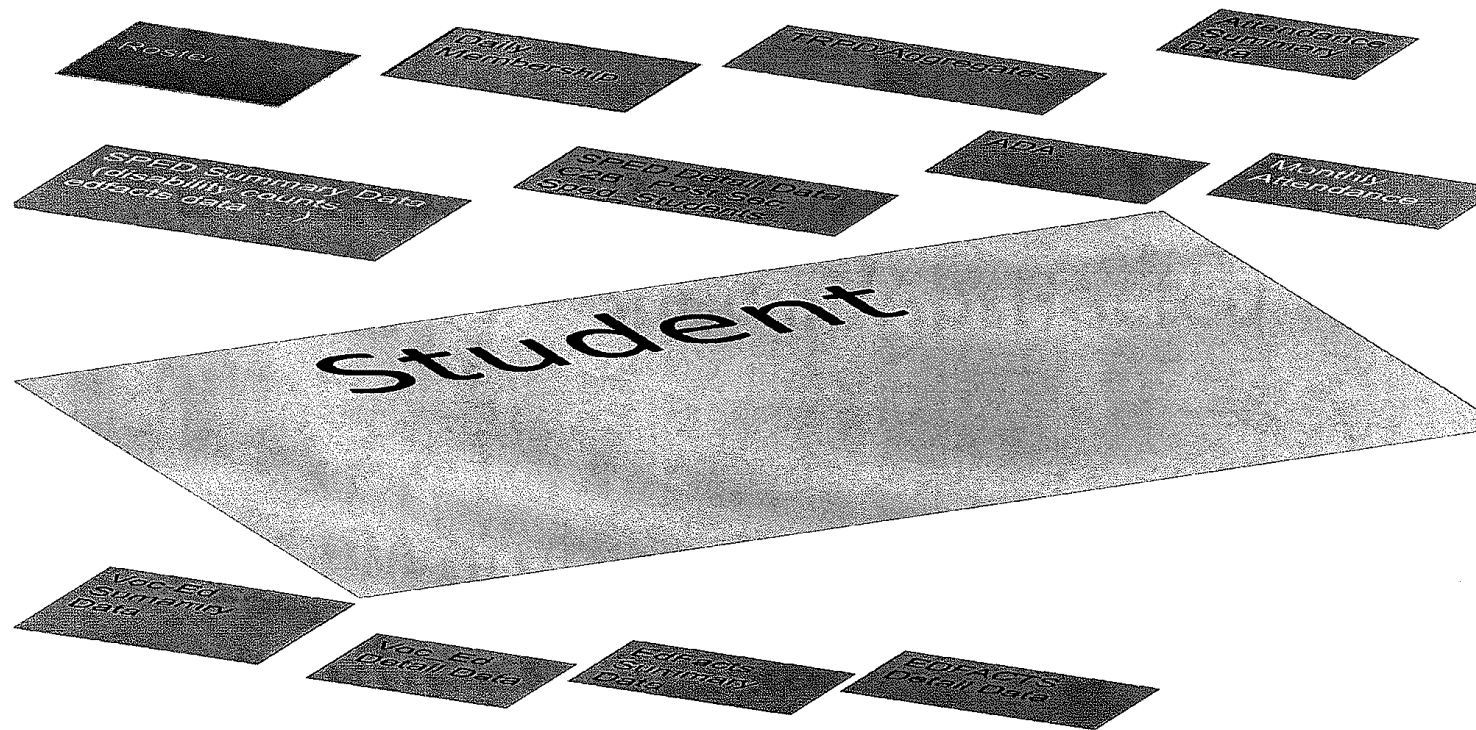
MSIS – A DatawareHouse Model...

What Do we have?

Data Warehouse Model – Mega Entities



Data Warehouse Model – Mega Entities – Special/Abstracted



Data Warehouse Model – Mega Processes

- School Data comes using XML Files Processed by Java Module and put in holding area (P1)
- Online updates to MSIS are done both in Students and Personnel area (P2)
- Batch Jobs in the night, picks up school files and update the program area files from the holding area files (P3)

Data Warehouse Model – Mega Processes

- Detail and summary reports are produced on request using MSIS reporting module and Discoverer (On Request) (P4)
- Three Annual Jobs are done (SPED Closing, Personnel Closing, and June 30, year end closing) and appropriate archive files are created (P5)

Data Warehouse Model – Mega Processes

- Interfaces (Licensure, MDHS, Lunch Data) give appropriate information for matching and updating to MSIS (P6)
- The EDFACTS reports are assembled using MSIS data, and manual compilation methods for Federal Reporting (P7)
- The SPED reports are assembled using MSIS data, and manual compilation methods for Federal Reporting (P8)

Data Warehouse Model – Mega Processes

- Voc Ed Processes are done using a few MSIS Processes and compiled manually by Voc-Ed Office (This is being automated) (P9)
- Numerous adhoc reports are produced using Discoverer by MSIS IT Personnel on request basis (P10)

Data Warehouse Model – Proposed Pathway

- Identify Stake Holders (S01-1)
- Collect the outputs (Reports) (S01-2)
- Prepare questionnaire on Expected Outputs of DWH and BI (S01-3)
- Circulate the questionnaire and consolidate answers (S01-4)
- Prepare Object-Based Mega-Entities and Dictionary (S01-5)

Data Warehouse Model – Proposed Pathway

- Document Virtual Column, and Timed flow (S02-1)
- Decide Logical Data and Process Model (S02-2)
- Resource Architecture, Hardware, Software, Personnel (S02-3)
- Paint Expected Outputs (S02-4)

Data Warehouse Model – Proposed Pathway

- Prepare Project Plans for: (S03)
 - Abstraction and Design (S03-1)
 - Development and Monitoring (S03-2)
 - Deployment and wrapping up first phase (S03-3)
 - Second Phase Abstraction (S03-4)
 - Second Phase Abstraction and Design (S03-5)
 - Development and Monitoring (S03-6)
 - Deployment and wrapping up second phase (S03-7)

EXHIBIT E

Potential Reports

Accreditation Standard 19 Report
Accreditation Standards Course Codes Report
Age and Experience of Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents Report
Age and Experience of Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents by Gender and Race Report
Alphabetical List of Personnel by Course Name Report
Archive Employee by Race/Gender
Assessment Tax Levy Information by District Report
Assessment Tax Levy Survey
Assistant Reading Instructor Report
Average Daily Attendance Report
Average Daily Membership Report
Average Instructional Personnel Salary by Race and Gender Report
Average Salary by Classroom Teachers Report
Average Salary by Position Assignment Report
Average Salary of Certified Instructional Personnel by Districts Report
Blank General/Schedule Employee Entry Form
Blank General/Schedule Special Education Employee Entry Form
Board Member Detail Report
Board Member Listing Report
Building Information
CRT Test Results
Carnegie Units Report
Class Overload Live Data Report
Class Overload Report
Classroom Teachers Report
Cohort
Course/Work Area Codes Report
Cumulative Enrollment Yearly Report
Detail Listing
Detail Personnel Listing Report
Discipline Incident Summary Report
Disposition Types Report
Dispositions by Race/Gender
District Calendar Report
District Event Calendar
District Personnel Approval Information Report

District Subject Counts Report
District Summary
District Supplement Report
District Zero Salary Report
Dropouts Yearly Report
Eligible Free Lunch Full Match Report
Employee by Race/Gender
Endorsement Area Report
Enrollment and Attendance Public Schools Report
Enrollment and Attendance Ranking Report
FETS Balance Sheet - Post Approved
FETS Balance Sheet - Pre Approved
FETS Bond Indebtedness Report
FETS Bonds Indebtness Entry Screen Report
FETS District Combined Finance Report
FETS Expenditure Report
FETS Expenditure for Public Schools Report
FETS Expense Codes Report
FETS Finance by Function Post-Approved Report
FETS Finance by Function Pre-Approved Report
FETS Finance by Fund Number Report - Post Approved
FETS Finance by Fund Number Report - Pre Approved
FETS Fund Codes Report
FETS Fund Function Report
FETS Fund Object Codes Report
FETS General Ledger Codes Report
FETS Indirect Cost Rate Application Report
FETS Mandatory Accounts Report
FETS Object Codes report
FETS Receipts for Public Schools Report
FETS Revenue Report -
FETS Special Education Maintenance of Effort Report
FETS Title I Maintenance of Effort Report
FETS Vocational Education Maintenance of Effort Report
Final Allotment Report
Free Lunch Eligibility
Free and Reduced Lunch Student Roster Report
Fund Balance Report - Post Approved
Fund Balance Report - Pre Approved
General/Schedule Employee Listing Report
Generate Follow-Up Enrollment General Report
Generate M&S PRI District Summary Report
Generate M&S PRI Instructional Programs Report
Generate M&S PRI Local Administration Report

Generate M&S PRI Special Populations Report
Generate M&S PRI Vocational Guidance Report
Generate M&S Post-Secondary PRI Tech Prep Consortia Report
Generate M&S Post-Secondary PRI Work-Based Learning Report
Generate M&S Short-Term Adult PRI Report
Generate Post-Secondary Occupational Program Final Enrollment
Generate Post-Secondary Workbase Program Final Enrollment
Generate Secondary Basic Skills, Enrichment, Discovery Programs
Final Enrollment
Generate Secondary Consumer Homemaking & Family/Consumer
Science Programs Final
Generate Secondary Cooperative Program Final Enrollment Report
Generate Secondary Occupational Program Final Enrollment Report
Gifted Students Report
Graduate Counts by District
High School Graduates and Other Completers Report
Incident Types Report (Disciplinary)
Incidents by Race/Gender (Disciplinary)
Instructional Personnel Number and Average Salary Report
Instructional Personnel by District, Race and Gender Report
Instructional Personnel by Race and Gender Report
Instructional Personnel by Years of Experience Report
Iowa Test Results
LRE Live Report
LRE Report
Listing of School Personnel Selected Mississippi Adequate Education Program Report
MAEP Force Select by Multiple Programs Report
Mississippi Adequate Education Program Force Select by District Report
Mississippi Adequate Education Program Salary Schedule Report
Mississippi Report Card Accreditation Level by School
Mississippi Report Card Student Teacher Information by District
Mississippi Report Card Vocational Education Information by District
Monthly Attendance Report
National Board Personnel
Net Membership Race/Gender Report
Net Membership by District Report
Net Membership by School Report
Number and Average Salaries of Instructional Personnel by Certification Report
Number and Average Salary of Classroom Teachers by Training
Number and Percentage of Promotions and Non-Promotions Report
Number and Percentage of Promotions and Non-Promotions by Grades Report
Number and Percentage of Promotions and Non-promotions by Grade per School Report
Number of Minimum Program Unit Teachers by Years of Experience Report
Number of School Board Members by Type of School District Report

Number of School Districts by Type of Organized Unit Report
 Numerical List of Personnel by Course Code Report
 PA CARNEGIE Unit with NO CREDIT
 Paraprofessionals
 Personnel Snap Shot Detail Personnel Listing Report
 Personnel Snap Shot Error List for Allocation of MAEP Teacher Units
 Personnel Snap Shot Listing of School Personnel Selected Mississippi Adequate Education Program Report
 Personnel Snap Shot Teacher Units Edit Report
 Placement Difference Pre Cutoff
 Post-Secondary Teacher Schedule Report
 Promotions and Non-promotions Detail Listing
 Public School Districts Report
 Public School Districts by Size (Enrollment) Report
 Public School Traditional Graduates by Race and Gender Report
 Public Schools by Size (Enrollment) Report
 Race Gender Breakdown of Dropouts Yearly Report
 Race Gender Breakdown of Dropouts by Grades Yearly Report
 Reasons for Dropouts Yearly Report
 Required Courses in the Curriculum for Secondary School Standard 32 Live Data Report
 Required Courses in the Curriculum for Secondary School Standard 32 Report
 SPED Educational Placement Codes Report
 SPED Teacher Units Methodology To Support Programs For Students With Disability
 Salaries of Administrative Personnel Report
 Salary of Superintendents Report
 School Calendar Report
 Served by Resident District
 Source of Revenue by District (Local-State-Federal) Report
 Special Ed Student Table 1 Ages 3-5 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 1 Ages 6-21 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 1 Race 3-5 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 1 Race 6-21 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 2 Disabilities Ages 3-21 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 2 Disabilities Ages 3-5 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 2 Disabilities Ages 6-21 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 3 Correctional Facilities Report
 Special Ed Student Table 3 Disabilities Ages 3-5 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 3 Disabilities Ages 6-21 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 3 Educational Placement Ages 3-5 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 3 Educational Placement Race 3-5 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 3 Educational Placement Race 6-21 Rep.
 Special Ed Student Table 3 Private Schools Ages 3-21 Report
 Special Ed Student Table 4 Exiting Disabilities by Age 14-21 Rep.
 Special Ed Student Table 4 Exiting Disabilities by Disability Age 14-21 Report

Special Ed Student Table 4 Exiting Disabilities by Race Age 14-21
Special Education Disabilities Codes Report
Special Education Related Services Codes Report
Sped Reports
State Roster
State Subject Counts Report
Student Discipline Report
Student Dropouts Report
Student Indicators
Student Intervention Compliance
Student Intervention Roster
Student Promotions and Non-Promotions Report
Student Transfer From Report
Student Transfer To Report
Student Unexcused Absences Report
Subject Counts Report
Summer Activity Report
Summer Program Detail Personnel Listing Report
Summer Program Personnel Edit Report
Summer Program Report
Superintendent by Training - Gender and Race Report
Superintendent by Training Report
Table 5 by Disability
Table 5 by Race
Teacher Budget Report
Teacher Salary Schedule Report
Teacher Schedule Students Matching Report
Teacher Schedule Students Not Matching Report
Teacher Unit Allocation Report
Teacher Units Edit Report
Tentative Allotment Report
Test Results Grade Level - School
Test Results Subject Area - School
Total MAEP Force Select Exceeds District/Instructional Time
Transition Services Compliance Post-Cutoff Report
Transition Services Compliance Pre-Cutoff Report
Transportation Allotment Report
Transportation Annual Report
User Defined Personnel Report
Vocational Slot Usage
Vocational Teacher Budget Report
Vocational Teacher Budget Reimbursement Report
YTD Attendance

The following Superintendent Annual Reports will be considered for migration into the Data Warehouse / BI System:

- School Districts by Type of Organized Unit
- School Board Members
- Public School Districts by Size (Enrollment)
- Public Schools by Size (Enrollment)
- Number of Public Schools
- State Totals by Grade, Elementary Category, and Secondary Category for:
Net Membership Month 01 (Enrollment),
- Average Daily Attendance (does not include Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 62 and Special Education Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 52) for Month 01,
- Cumulative Enrollment, and Average Daily Membership (does not include Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 62 and Special Education Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 52) for Month 01
- State Totals of Traditional Graduates by Race and Sex
- State Totals of Diploma Graduates, Certificate Recipients, GED Credential Recipients, Occupational Diploma Recipients and Total Graduates/Completers
- State Totals Promotions and Non-promotions by Grade with percentages
- State Totals of Dropouts by Grade Level with percentages based on Month 01 enrollment
- State Totals for Public School Personnel – Certified Staff and Non-Certified Staff broken down by categories with number and average salary for each category and sub-category
- Age and Experience of Superintendents

EXHIBIT F
REQUIREMENTS MATRIX



Requirement Matrix
3662.xls